Implementation of e-Portfolio System Based on Developmental Student Advising Approaches

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Synopsis:

Developmental advising is a process to recognize the importance of interactions between the student and the campus environment. Student engagement is an important feature of higher education and the educational practices occurred both inside and outside the classroom. E-portfolio combined with student advising system supports student development process while both students and advisors share responsibilities for the advising relationship.

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I.   Background

Student engagement is an important feature of higher education. The most common approach for engaging students comes from educational experiences. Educational experiences can be participated inside and outside the classroom. Through these experiences, students are able to learn both academic knowledges and extra-curricular experiences. With these two different practices, students gain the ability to integrate knowledges to connect the world.

Students should follow an orientation to focus on learning themselves, rather than getting the results. Based on this learning process, students need to understand what they have done and what they are able to do. The important things in this process are what students know about themselves and what they learn next. E-portfolio is a way for students to explore and reflect on themselves. The process of documenting e-portfolio is the most thoughtful step of reflecting on for students, and therefore advisors should pay attention to their students' development progress.

Developmental advising is a process to recognize the importance of interactions between students and advisors. E-portfolio system supports individual student's development progress. It contains the student's past, present, and future. Advisors take part in student's development process to review and give a comment about the individual student's e-portfolio. Advisors and students should share responsibility for the advising relationship. This process creates another opportunity to care for students, and students consider this process as a valuable feedback system from their advisors.

II.   Designing e-Portfolio System

Since 2013 of Academic year, all students spend their freshman year in the Residential College of Yonsei University at Songdo international campus. The Residential College complements the formal learning environment found in the classroom by offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities (informal learning) out of the classroom. Freshman-year students start in planning their college life through freshman advising seminar classes and start to keep the records up to date in e-portfolio system.

E-portfolio is composed of two parts: college life plans and learning outcomes from both academic lives and extra-curricular activities. College life planning session in e-portfolio system consider self-assessment first. This assessment consists of four aspects: a) setting up individual vision statement; b) describing self-image 10 years from now; c) understanding individual strengths; d) understanding individual weakness. College life planning is designed on each semester basis from freshman year to senior year, while learning outcomes is designed including details of academic achievements, research, publications, awards, affiliations, activities, and more.

All freshman year students put their visions and goals of college life into e-portfolio system during taking a class of freshman advising seminar. The 4-year college life and academic planning are started from the first semester of freshman year. E-portfolio system also encourages students to integrate several experiences to enhance their self-understanding. This self-reflecting process is done through working on e-portfolio over time. At the end of each semester, students spend some time to reflect and record individual assessments into the e-portfolio system. This planning and assessment session is aligned with the freshman advising seminar class which is a mandatory course of freshman first semester.

Once students engage activities, either academic lives or extra-curricular activities, they are encouraged to organize and evaluate themselves what they have done. Students keep track of their development through reviewing e-portfolio. E-portfolio system supports a framework that students can make their learning experiences, and create another opportunities of learning experiences. As a result, it becomes to develop each student's capabilities. This system encourages students to integrate self-understanding, learning experiences, and future learning opportunities.

III.   Implementation of e-Portfolio System

To provide an integrated students advising excellence, e-portfolio system is combined with student advising system. The advising process with student's learning experiences and outcomes create another chance to monitor the students when they need an advice. For advisors, one of the challenges is to manage the student's learning outcomes and expectations. Providing students an advising opportunity is essential for students to learn and make connections to the world. It becomes to help the student to give motivation in learning.

Through the whole process of implementation and operation of the student advising system combining students' e-portfolio, we experienced that student advising system is quite successful on interaction with students. E-portfolio system is able to help providing advisors to individualize services and give students assistance beyond in routine. When advisors meet a student, this system is very useful for advisors to figure out student's current status and near future plans.

The system is operated on internet-accessible systems. All students are assigned to their advisors, faculty advisor and academic advisor, through the system. Thus students can easily check their advisors. The most important thing is that advisors consider students. Consideration is given to other important campus partners to share the responsibility, making connections beyond the classroom.

E-portfolio system starts with the freshman advising seminar. All students build a 4-year academic plan and their college life plan in this seminar session. Students are strongly recommended to have a review session with advisors, and advisors can give them motivation and encouragement to get better accomplishment. From sophomore to senior, students keep updating their learning opportunities and outcomes. It is very valuable input when advisor allow students to make connections. In order to use e-portfolio effectively, advisors should have a comprehensive understanding of students. Student advising using e-portfolio system is personally a significant way related to overall learning, individual goals, and identity development. It can provide advisors to individualize services and give students assistance beyond in routine. The e-portfolio system has been an efficient and effective tools & methods for today's student advising.

IV.   Considerations for Future Operations

University College of Yonsei University builds up student advising system and has been used it for over 15 years. In the beginning, only freshman has been used this system over years. Now the system is extended to be ready to be used not only for freshman but also up to senior. E-portfolio system is combined into the student advising system, and can be more valuable tool for student advising. The system provides a much richer set of data. Through student advising system combined with students' e-portfolio system, the student learning and student engagement will be maximized.

There are two aspects should be considered: advisors should be aware that the student advising process is necessary tools for students' development; students should realize that documentation of e-portfolio is a development process to help themselves. E-portfolio system and advising process provide a way for students to make a variety of connection as they develop their capabilities during the college years.